

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

Awakened India



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वसिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्नियोधत ।

Katha Upan. I. iii. 4.

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Prabuddha Bharata

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प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upan. I. iii. 4

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

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[No. 282

CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

PART II.—XIII.—(Concluded)

Subjects—Rules for the future Math for women—great good will be done to society by Brahmacharinis trained in the Math.—There is no difference of sex in the Parabrahman—it is present only in the world of subject and object, hence it is not impossible for womankind to be knowers of Brahman.—Although there may be many defects in the current female education, yet it is not reprehensible.—Religion is to be made the basis of education.—Good works are those that help the manifestation of Brahman within man.—Although egoistic work may be incompatible with the Knowledge of Brahman, yet it is a secondary means to its attainment.—By Karma is the purification of human mind attained and without purification of mind, knowledge is impossible.]

Disciple.— Sir, please tell me about the Math for women you desire to establish. I feel greatly enthusiastic to know about it.

Swamiji.— On the other side of the Ganges a big plot of land would be acquired where unmarried virgins or Brahmacharini widows will remain; devout daughters of householders will also be able to stay for a period. Men will have no concern with this Math. The elder Sadhus of the male Math will manage the affairs of this Math from a distance. There shall be a school attached to this female

Math, in which religious scriptures, literature, Sanskrit, grammar, should be taught and even some amount of English education should be given. Other matters also, such as sewing and needle-work, culinary art, all works of household management, nursing, and upbringing of children will also be taught. Japa, worship and meditation shall remain as part of the teaching.

Those who will be able to live here renouncing home and family ties will be provided with food and clothing from this Math. Those who will not be able to do that will be able to study in this Math as

day-scholars. If desired, by the permission of the head of the Math the latter will be allowed to stay in the Math for a period and during their stay will be maintained by the Math. The elder Brahmacharinis will take charge of the training of the girl students in Brahmacharya. After five or six years' stay in the Math, the guardians of the girls may marry them. If deemed fit for Yoga and religious life, with the permission of their guardians they will be allowed to stay in the Math taking the vow of celibacy. These celibate nuns will in time be the teachers and preachers of the Math. In villages and towns they will open centres and strive for the spread of female education. By the agency of such preachers of character imbued with the religious spirit, there will be the spread of real female education in the country. So long as students will remain in association with the female Math, Brahmacharya will be the basic idea of this Math.

Spirituality, sacrifice and self-control will be the ornament of the pupils of this Math; and service or Seva Dharma will be the ideal of their life-work. Seeing such ideal characters, who will not respect them, and have faith in them? If the life of the women of this country be moulded in such ideals then will there again be the appearance of such ideal female characters as Sita, Savitri and Gargi. In the strong bonds of Desachara (local customs) rendered lifeless and inert, the women of the country have come to such straits which you could only understand if you visited Western countries. You are responsible for this miserable condition of women, and it is in your hands to raise again the women of the country. Therefore I say, set to work. What will it do, merely to memorise a few scriptures like the Vedas and the Vedanta?

Disciple.— Sir, if girl students after being trained in the Math marry, how will one find ideal characters in them? Will it not be better if such a rule is made that those who will obtain education in the Math, shall not marry?

Swamiji.— Can that be done all at once? In the beginning they are to be given education and left to themselves. After that they will act as they think best. After marriage and entering the world they will inspire their husbands with noble ideals and be the mothers of heroic sons. But the guardians of the students in the female Math will not be allowed to even mention the name of the marriage of their daughters before they attain the age of fifteen—this rule must be observed.

Disciple.— Sir, then those girl students will not command reputation in society. Nobody would like to marry them.

Swamiji.— Why will not they be wanted in marriage? You have not understood the course of society even now. Such learned and accomplished girls will not stand in want of bridegrooms. Society now-a-days does not follow the practice of child-marriage—nor will follow in future. Even now, don't you see?

Disciple.— But whatever you say, there will be violent opposition and protest against this in the beginning.

Swamiji.— Let it be, what is there to fear in that? Righteous work initiated with moral earnestness and courage, if confronted with obstruction, will awaken the moral power of the initiators the more (to bear down the opposition and carry it to success). That which has no obstruction, no opposition, only takes men to the path of moral death. Struggle is the sign of life.

Disciple.— Yes, that is so.

Swamiji.— In the highest truth of the

Parabrahman, there is no distinction of sex. We, in the relative plane of "I" and "thou", notice this difference of sex. The more the mind becomes introspective and inward, the more that idea of difference vanishes. Ultimately when the mind is merged and is one with the homogeneous and undifferentiated Brahman, then such idea as that this is a man, or that a woman, does not remain at all. We have seen this practically embodied in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. Therefore do I say that though outwardly there may be difference between men and women, in their real nature there is no difference. Therefore if a man can be a knower of Brahman, why cannot a woman attain to the same knowledge? Therefore I was saying, if one amongst women becomes a knower of Brahman, then by the radiance of her personality, thousands of women will be inspired, awakened to truth, and great well-being of the country and society will ensue. Do you understand?

Disciple.— Sir, your teachings have opened my eyes.

Swamiji.— Not fully yet. When you will realise the all-illuminating truth of the Atman, then will you see that this difference of men and women has vanished altogether; then will you look upon all woman as the manifestation of the Brahman. We have seen in Sri Ramakrishna this idea of divine Motherhood in every woman, of whatever caste she might be, or whatever qualities she might possess. Because I have seen, therefore I tell you so much to be likewise and open centres of education for women in villages, and try to uplift them. If the women are raised then their sons and daughters will by their noble actions glorify the name of the country,— then will culture, knowledge, Shakti and devotion awaken in the country.

Disciple.— But, Sir, it appears some contrary results have come out of the present female education. With a little of education, they learn to wear gowns and chemises, and take to luxuries and frivolities, but how far they are advancing in the spirit of sacrifice and renunciation, self-control, austerity, Brahmacharya and other qualities conducive to Brahma-jnana, does not appear clearly.

Swamiji.— In the beginning a few mistakes like that are unavoidable. When a new idea is preached in the country, some not being able to grasp the idea aright go wrong like that. What does that matter to the well-being of society at large? But those who in the beginning have strenuously endeavoured for even the little of female education that now obtains, is there any doubt of the greatness of their heart? But the truth, do you know, is, that some defect and deficiency must creep in learning or culture which is devoid of a religious basis.

But now female education is to be spread with religion as the centre. All other learning besides religion will be secondary to it. In the female education which has obtained up till now, religion has been made a secondary concern, hence those faults you were speaking of have arisen. But no blame attaches therefore to women. Reformers having advanced to impart and spread female education without being Brahma-jnanis, have taken a false step. Founders of all good works, before they initiate and enter on their desired work, ought to attain to the knowledge of the Atman. Otherwise, defects will arise in their works.

Disciple.— Yes, Sir, it is observed, that many educated women spend their time in reading novels; but in Eastern Bengal, even with education women have

have not given up their religious practices and observances. Is it so here in this part?

Swamiji.— Good and evil are in every country. Our work is—doing good works in our lives and holding an example before others. No work succeeds by condemnation. That only repels people. Let anybody say what he likes, don't contradict anybody. In this world of Maya whatever work you will do, will be associated with some defect.—“All works are covered with defects like fire covered with smoke.” But will you on that account sit actionless? As much as you can, you must do some good work.

Disciple.— What is this good work?

Swamiji.— What helps the manifestation of Brahman is good work. All works can be done, if not directly, at least as indirectly helpful to the manifestation of the truth of the Atman. But following the path laid down by Rishis, the knowledge of the Atman manifests quickly; on the contrary, doing of works which have been indicated by scriptural writers as wrong, brings only bondage of the soul, and this bondage of delusion does not sometimes vanish for many lives. But in all ages and places, freedom is sure to be attained by Jivas ultimately. For, the Atman is the real nature of the Jiva. Can anybody give up his own Swarupa? If you fight with your shadow for a thousand years, can you drive it away from you?—it will always remain with you.

Disciple.— But, Sir, according to Sankaracharya Karma is antagonistic to Jnana. He has refuted the *समुच्चय* or intermingling of Jnana and Karma in many ways. So how can Karma be helpful to the manifestation of Jnana?

Swamiji.— Sankara after saying so has again indicated Karma as subsidiary

help to the manifestation of Jnana and the means for the purification of the Sattva element. But I do not contradict the conclusion of Sankara that in absolute transcendent knowledge there is no touch of any work. But so long as man is within the realm of the consciousness of work, doer of work, and the object of work he is powerless to sit idle without doing some work. So, as work is thus the inevitable nature of Jiva, then why do you not do such works as are helpful to the manifestation of the knowledge of the Atman? That all work is tainted with ignorance may be true from the transcendent standpoint, still within Vyavahara—normal relative consciousness, works have a great fitness and efficacy in human life. When you will realise the Atman, in that state the doing of work or its non-performance will be within your control and whatever you will do in that state will be good work, conducive to the good and well-being of Jivas and the world. With the manifestation of Brahman even the breath of your life will be to the good of Jivas. Then you will not have to work from the level of the lower ego by means of conscious planning.

Disciple.— Yes, it is a beautiful conclusion reconciling Karma and Jnana from the Vedantic standpoint.

At this time the bell for the evening meal rang and Swamiji asked the disciple to go and partake of the meal. The disciple prostrating at the feet of Swamiji before departure prayed with folded hands, “Bless me that I may attain to the Knowledge of Brahman in this life.” Swamiji putting his hand on his head said, “Don't fear, my son. You are not like an ordinary worldly man—neither a householder nor a Sannyasin—a new type.”

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

INDIA is One—from the spiritual viewpoint. This is evidenced in our literature and religious beliefs,—and the background is the Vision of Brahman, the triumph of the soul over the consciousness of the body. This is the land of spiritual ideas. At bottom we are one from Ceylon to the Himalayas, because our ideas, though innumerable and most marvellously complex, are one, bearing relation to the Vision of the Divine. Never have there been greater men than the Rishis; never have there been more comprehensive thought-systems than those of the Vedanta. Our epics, the Ramayana and Mahabharata, are charged with most inspiring narratives of heroes and of sages. They embody the very highest ethical and spiritual outlook and they give us the history of the Indian Ideas and of Indian Greatness. Where shall one find more inspiring Scriptures than those of the Vedas and the Upanishads? And where in the history of human thought are there elsewhere such divine utterances of soul as the Bhagavad Gita and the Nirvana Shatka!

Here, in our motherland, the human mind has thought out the most inclusive ideas, going beyond the very foundations of logic into the depths of the spiritual consciousness. Here, in our motherland, the human Soul has struck the highest note of truth concerning the Nature of Man; Here, in this land, the Grand Exclamations of the Soul which has attained the Divine Consciousness, ring out, "Aham Brahmasmi!" and "Tat Tvam asi!" Behold the long list of the Avatars!

Rama! Krishna! Buddha! Shankara! Chaitanya! Guru Nanak! Behold the retinue of philosophers, Kapila, Gautama, Kanada, Jaimini, Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya, Vallabhacharya and the philosophers of Nalanda and Nuddea universities!

Are we then Backwards amongst the nations! Away with the hypnosis! For, in thought and in spirit, we are the masters of the Earth! All that we want is—the Consciousness of Who We Are! *Then—all our problems shall be solved.* Let every Indian stand up and say to the world, "What shall you teach us in matters of the soul and in matters of the heart? With us philosophy is *religion*; and with us religion is *in the blood*. Before Moses was born,—the Vedas Were. Before Christ taught,—Sri Krishna and Buddha redeemed the world; for if the world follows Their Teaching—it shall be saved."

Aye, India is One. For from North to South and from East to West this is the basis of Hinduism. It is Hinduism. From Kashmir and Nepal to Rameswar and Bombay and from Kailash to Ceylon, India is One in its Culture, in its Faith, in its Spiritual Outlook. True India is *not* an India of *Provinces*, but of *Culture*; it is a *Nation*.

And what of empire! India has been united and made one many times before. What of the empire of Rama and Ajodhya! What of the Yudhisthira Raj when the King of Ceylon came to acknowledge the Overlord at the Durbar at Indraprastha! India

was One then, and an empire. What of Chandragupta Maurya, with his vast and wide empire, and the provinces of Kashmir and Nepal and even Afghanistan! Then India was One and it was Great! What of the empire of Asoka! What of the empire of the Vikramaditya! What of the empire of Moghuls! India is not only One, it has the potentialities of strength and many times has that strength been made manifest!

And what of art! Long before the Gothic cathedrals were constructed, India had built her rock-hewn temples and monasteries with groined arch and pictured walls! And what shall compare with the Face of Buddha! Here the standards of soul hold sway. Spirit, not form, is depicted. Physical beauty and appearance has been subordinated to the representation of spiritual beauty and spiritual reality. Here in India, on all occasions,—and in all ways, the Soul shines forth! Behind our civilisation is the *Soul*.

And of poetry, what shall exceed the glories of Valmiki and Tulsi Das, of Kalidasa and Ramprasad! Side by side, place the rhapsodies of the Indian Imagination and those of the Western mind! And the balance swings in favour of the motherland. So we stand not as beggars at the portals of other civilisations. We come to exchange! We shall accept certain useful commodities from the Western nations, but in exchange we give That which is Invaluable,—the Spiritual Outlook. We are of the race of the Rishis. We have more than Robber Barons' blood in our veins. Our aristocracy is the most exclusive of all, for it is the aristocracy of ideals and of thought and of spiritual

culture. We stand powerful and rich before the world. We are *not* poor, nor weak, nor miserable! Let us stand boldly before the nations, showing them the Glories of our Past, the Realities of our Present. We are a Nation of Powers and Potentialities!

With one act of self-consciousness *as to who we are* we shall strike off all hypnosis that binds our souls down. *And there is no greater enemy of our own progress than our own selves, for we have allowed ourselves to think of the Nation as effete and discordant, when it has an original culture and is One throughout.* It is we who bind ourselves down. It is we who suffer who are to blame for that suffering. The problem lies with us; its solution depends on us. We must set ourselves to the task of consolidating the nation first of all by learning and by fathoming the greatness of our culture, the greatness of our civilisation and the superiority of our ideals. We desire no reform; we desire an intensification of our culture. And the first motto is, "O Thou Indian! Know thy Self!" and the prayer to the Mother is that which Swami Vivekananda has given in our keeping,—O Thou Mother of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness unto me! O Thou Truth of Strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness, and—MAKE ME A MAN?"

The heart is the greatest river of your life, the head is the bridge over the river. Always follow the heart.

—Swami Vivekananda.

DIVINE INCARNATIONS.

VII.

THE next incarnation is Parasurama or Rama with the Battle-axe. In olden days there was in Northern India a very powerful monarch who went by the name of Gadhi. Gadhi was one day sitting on his throne when the servants announced a Brahmin. The Brahmin was brought in and given a higher seat than the king, for in those days the Kshatriyas always honoured the Brahmins. The King then asked the visitor, "What can I do for you?" The man was poorly dressed but his face was calm, quiet and illumined as that of one who had realised the Truth. The Brahmin said, "I want only one thing of you, I want your daughter for my wife." This was a great shock to the king, who thought: "My daughter is so delicate, so used to luxury, to good food and the best of care; to go out into an Ashrama in the forest and live on herbs and roots, with no one to serve her,—how can she bear it?" Such were the thoughts in his mind, but in order not to give a denial in the very face of the Brahmin, he pretended to consent, yet at the same time he tried to make such an impossible condition that it would be the same as a refusal; so he said: "I will give my daughter to you if you can get me a thousand white horses, all with one black ear."

How could anyone find this? At most one can get four or five such horses, but a thousand! Not even an emperor can do that. So the king said to himself, "The Brahmin will not be able to do this and my daughter will be left to choose her husband." But the Brahmin replied, "Yes, I can give you that." So he called upon Varuna, the Lord of the sea, obtained from him the required number of horses of that particular type, and presented them to the king.

The king then said: "This Brahmin must be more powerful than an emperor, he must be as powerful as God Himself, for he can command a thousand such horses to be brought in this way." So he was happy to give him his daughter, and they were married. The Brahmin's name was Richika.

Now his wife's mother had no male child and a mother without a male child is no mother. She knew that her son-in law was not an ordinary person, so she said to his daughter, "Ask your husband for a male child and at the same time ask a male child for me." So the daughter, whose name was Satyavati, went to her husband and did as her mother had told her. Richika said, "Yes, I will do it," and he prepared two lumps of what is called *Charu* (a milk-rice preparation) into one of which he infused the Brahmin spirit and into the other the Kshatriya spirit. Then he told his wife to take one and give the other to the mother and they would both bring forth a male child. Having done this, he went away. But the mother thought: "Naturally he has more love for his wife, so what he has given her will be better." Therefore she asked her daughter to exchange her share with her and as the daughter was very loving she consented. Thus the lump that was meant for the daughter was taken by the mother. When Richika came and heard what had been done, he was much displeased and said to his wife: "As a result of this confusion, your son will be of a dire nature, and your brother will be a pious Brahmin." Then Satyavati who was frightened entreated her husband to rectify the mistake, and the Rishi was pleased to say, "All right. Your *grandson* shall be of that terrible nature.

In course of time the daughter brought

forth a child by the name of Jamadagni and the mother also brought forth a male child who was afterwards celebrated as Viswamitra. Jamadagni was a most pious and powerful Brahmin. He used to live in his hermitage with his wife Renuka, the daughter of king Prasanajit. Although he was a Brahmin he had a fancy for archery and often practised with his bow and arrow. One day when he was thus practising, and his wife was picking up the arrows for him, he shot one at a great distance and Renuka went to bring it back; but owing to the heat she could not bring it in time, for sometimes the arrows went several furlongs away. Only after she had rested under a tree for a while was she able on that day to bring the arrow back. In the meanwhile her husband was waiting, and when he saw her coming, he asked, "Where have you been so long?" "Master, she replied, "I am so sorry, but the sun was so hot that I could not come more quickly. See, my feet and body are all scorched." Then Jamadagni grew very angry with the sun for thus troubling his wife and he raised his bow to shoot an arrow against him, but as he was aiming, the sun came to him and begged that he should not injure him. But Jamadagni said to him, "Why have you so troubled my wife? See, her body and feet are all scorched by your rays." Then the sun said, "I am very sorry, but I promise that she will not suffer any more." And he gave Renuka a pair of shoes and an umbrella, so that when he went for her husband's arrows she would not be burnt by the sun.

Jamadagni and Renuka brought forth children, the youngest of whom was Rama. One day a king, whose name was Kartaviryarjuna, came to the hermitage in all his regal pomp and power to prostrate before the great Brahmin. Jamadagni said to him, "Sire, you are my guest to-day." But the king replied, "Oh no! I have a big retinue with me. You cannot entertain them all.

They are tired no doubt, but by a forced march we can reach home; so I need not trouble you, Master." "No, no," the Brahmin insisted, "I have a cow. She will give all that is needed." Then he took the cow by the horn and said, "Dear cow, to-day this king has come with all his retinue; please give them whatever they wish." And the cow gave to each whatever he desired. To the thousands of soldiers she gave the best dishes, and money as well.

Seeing this, the king wanted to take the cow with him; but Jamadagni objected, saying: "This is my daughter, I cannot part with her." Still the king insisted, but the Brahmin would not let her go. Now this king had one thousand hands, five hundred on the right side and five hundred on the left side, so that when he fought with his enemies he could shoot as many arrows at a time. This made him very powerful and when the Brahmin continued to oppose him, he dragged the cow away by force. Rama was not there at the time, but when he came home and found what had happened, he grew very angry, and having a battle-axe in his hand, he rushed to the palace and began to fight. He cut off all the hands of the king, and killed him and his children. When he returned to the hermitage and told his father what he had done, the father said, "I am very sorry for what you have done. For a Brahmin's chief virtue is forgiveness. Besides he was an anointed king. So you should expiate your sin by visiting places of pilgrimage with a devout heart."

Now Renuka was sent to bring water for the sacrifice, but when she went to the lake she saw a Gandharva king playing in the water. The Gandharvas are half human and half god and very beautiful to look at and Renuka was so charmed by the appearance of this one that she stopped to watch him as he played in the water. This made her late for the sacrifice and as she returned to the hermitage she realised that she had commit-

ted a great sin, for there is no greater sin for a woman than to love another than her husband even mentally. So when she placed the water-pot before the sacrifice, she was filled with the sense of guilt and shame. Then the Rishi said, "This woman is unchaste, is there no one to kill her?" All hesitated, for no one is willing to kill his mother; but Rama came and hearing his father's question, he at once killed her. Then the father said, "Now kill all these disobedient children," and he killed them also. The father was pleased with his perfect obedience and said, "My son, you have done well. Now ask any boon you like." Rama replied, "Father, I ask but one thing. Make my mother and all my brothers alive again and may they totally forget this incident." So they were all brought back to life.

At that time the Kshatriyas were very proud and vain, for everything belonged to them, so they thought that they were the lords of the whole universe. One day, when Rama was away from the Ashrama and Jamadagni was in deep meditation, the sons of King Kartavirya, who all along had been burning with anger and determined to revenge their father's death, came to the hermitage and began killing everyone and finally killed even Jamadagni. The mother, wild with grief, kept crying, "Rama, Rama, where are you? Your father is killed, why do you not come?" Then Rama came and when he saw the dead body of his father, he set out in anger and destroyed not only the royal line of Kartavirya, but all the Kshatriyas, repeating the process twenty-one times. Then he returned to the hermitage where the dead body of his father had been entrusted to his brothers. Then he took the severed head, placed it on the body, and duly performed a big sacrifice to please the Lord of the universe, after which he gave away the whole world to the Brahmins. This completed the sacrifice and he went away to pass the rest of his life in meditation and austerity.

It is said that when Rama killed his mother, the axe would not leave his hand. It is such a sin to kill one's own mother! He could not get rid of the axe by any means, until he at last took a bath in the sacred river Brahmaputra then only did the axe fall from his hand.

Long after, Parasurama had also an encounter with Sri Ramachandra when the latter was returning to Ajodhya after his marriage. He wanted to test the actual worth of the young Prince, and was satisfied that his prowess was superhuman, nay, it was divine. Then he went back and buried himself in his Tapasya again.

Now, in what way did Parasurama serve the world by killing all the Kshatriyas? It is said that Mother Earth complains every now and then that the weight upon her has become too heavy. When does she feel the heaviness? When her children have become wicked, proud and think themselves greater than God. The more egotism rises in you, the more you will think that God is nothing. Now, a pious woman like our Mother cannot bear the company of such unholy children, for she is a goddess and always knows that God is the one source of all power. Therefore she cannot bear the company of those who do not honour God, or who deny God, while she loves the company of the devotees of God. So, when her children became proud and wicked, she prayed; "Oh God! Please rid me of these evil-doers, whom I cannot look upon as my children. Send some one to destroy them." And because she was a true devotee, God heard her prayer and came down with a battle-axe in His hand. If it is good to punish all evil-doers, then Rama did well.

Whoever is proud, vain and egotistic cannot be moral; he is always an evil-doer.

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA.

STRUCTURE OF INDIAN SOCIETY.

THE framework which Indian culture has built up to translate its goal and motive into a form of human living in society and outer life has certain characteristics, some vital to its nature, some accidental forms of historical evolution, which mark it distinctly from other forms of social systems. While Indian culture has broadly recognised the mutability and liability to change of social forms and moulds of outer life, according to changes of time, needs and environmental conditions,—which have actually changed in the course of historical evolution,—yet as it has a distinct theme in the heart of its motive, the working out of that theme in outer social, economic or political life will also have a corresponding distinctness, the stressing of certain points and the relative subordination of others. It is essential that thought should be directed to the discovery of its dominant characteristics and trend, its light and shade. For here also there must be a vital element which is essentially connected with its central spiritual motive, which has to be preserved, rescued from the mass of accretions and debris of the ages. And here also, indiscriminate imposition of forms and motives alien to its nature, will either retard its natural functioning, or, if successful in superseding, will first disrupt its outward social structure which is its vital expression, as a preliminary to capturing its inner citadel of soul.

The first principle of the social organisation of India, vestiges of which still remain in the social polity and consciousness of the people, is that the social organism developed and determined its own line of

evolution unhampered and unfettered by the imposing rule of any centralised authority seeking to control its destiny or direct its course. The real initial movement for social progress and life came from the social units themselves, and did not depend on any centralised power to give it the impulse or guide its course. The state never pretended to organise the whole collective life of the people on a political basis, to make it its instrument. The idea of Nation State organised on the basis of political interests, welding the mass of people into a compact body for purposes of political aggression or defence and the efficiency of the State-machine, the prime function of social life, the only engine of culture, progress, economic well-being and efficiency did not get any hold on it. The State was relegated a subordinate place in the polity of collective life, its function being to uphold the Dharma of the people, to protect the interest of the collective pursuits which the life of the people evolved. The life of Indian society developed and pursued a different message from the perfecting of the State-machine by the wholesale surrender of life to its service, for political efficiency in conquest or defence. Its primary object was the evolution of spiritual humanity by passing through the framework of social life it presented, with its rule of Swadharma, pertaining to different grades of individuals and their station in life. The concept of Dharma is the ruling idea of social organism. Whereas in other societies, the impetus and motive of social progress and improvement has been communicated by the State, or other centralised

authority, here it has flown spontaneously from the Swadharma of the people. Therefore the Indian mind has been taught to cling through the ages to its Swadharma, the enlightened performance and expansion of it, and the sanction and motive power of Dharma is founded on its being the condition as stepping-stone to spiritual realisation and freedom. Periods of Indian history where this Swadharma has decayed, either on account of its crystallising into fixed forms and being prevented from expanding in response to progress, or where it has been overshadowed and depressed by the stress of another ideal, to which everybody was admitted without reference to *adharma* or fitness, natural capacity or stage of spiritual progress, have marked the stage of national stagnation. One such period happened during the Buddhistic period when the over-emphasis of other-worldly ideals and the extensive rule of monasticism to which everyone betook himself indiscriminately disturbed the balance of Indian society, the harmony of *Dharma* and *Moksha*, of the life of world and spirit.

The four natural divisions into which all societies fall, the man of intellect and spirituality, the man of action, the producer and wealth-getter, and the physical man, who serves the social body by physical labour and action, were the basis of the social principle of Varnashrama Dharma. But it was given a different significance and import from that of other societies by being informed with the spirit of Dharma. Each of the classes was assigned its proper Dharma, its ethical rule of development by the performance of function natural to it, and the motive power of this was found not in individual egoism seeking to exercise its right for getting the most of power, material comfort, advantage, over

others in the social body, but in the religious senses and duty of Dharma, according to the right performance of which its spiritual progress and freedom was determined. The aggregation of men in Indian society was based not on individual egoism seeking for the satisfaction of desires and individual self-interest, by mutual conflict and competition, but on the natural capacity, temperament and stage of spiritual development, and this development regulated not by individual passions, seeking for satisfaction but by the sense of Dharma as the means of spiritual development and freedom which was the goal. This basis of social groups on Dharma, has prevented the force of individual egoism, of competition and strife for material gains and possession and by allocating to each natural group its proper function (and *vritti*) of serving the social body by the performance of Swadharma, has prevented the strife of classes and individuals determined by the satisfaction and appropriation of material gains, wealth and power. Thus a natural growth of social groups and individuals has been secured, each by its Dharma contributing to the general good of society, and finding in it its own means of advancement in culture and spirituality. This regulation of the social mind by the superior claims of Dharma overriding selfish competition for appropriation of material gains has been rendered possible by the age-long permeation of the social consciousness with the idea of human life as a training ground for ethical and spiritual culture and the means of spiritual perfection and Moksha. The supreme governance of the spiritual destiny of man has always ruled the Indian conception of life and society. This work of permeating the mind of the mass of people with the sense of Dharma and

spiritual destiny is the effect of the teachings and influence of the saints and seers; the religious personages and Shastrakaras, who have all along been the true leaders of Indian society, the creators of its motives and forms, and not kings, statesmen and officials. That is why during the whole course of history Indian society has thrown up a succession of saints and sages who have powerfully moulded the life of the Indian people and with whose life-work and activities, the history of the commonalty in India is bound up. The history of the common people in India should be sought in this direction, not in political activity and struggle of political rights, in the rise of new political or socio-political movements. Western historians of India seeking in the latter direction have pronounced Indian society as devoid of history and Indian commonalty as unprogressive. The history of Indian society is the history of the evolution of its Dharma. It is from the Dharma of the Vaishyas and Sudras that flowed the wonderful arts and crafts of industry and this Dharma secured against competition for cheap products and markets, contributed to the perfection of workmanship for which they were famous. From the Dharma of the Kshatriyas sprung the public administration of ancient India which protected and upheld the Dharma of other classes and did not seek to turn them into instruments of the State-machine. From the Dharma of the Brahmans arose the wonderful metaphysics and philosophical monuments of Indian thought. Periods of prosperous and vigorous life had been when this Dharma had retained its balance and vigour, but when it was disturbed by the ascendancy of one over the others, discouraging and depressing them, it

stagnated the life of the people and the struggle was to recover the lost balance. The latter part of the decadence in Indian history before the Mahomedan period was marked by the struggle between Kshatriyas and Brahmans, striving to gain ascendancy over the social body, thus weakening their Dharma and the general Dharma of the people.

In the present time this disorganisation, confusion and loss of vigour of the Dharma of Indian people is the marked feature of decadence. It has either become fixed in form, stereotyped and crystallised, thus prevented from expanding, making new combinations and throwing out fresh varieties, or it has lost in vigour. This reinstatement of the Swadharma of the people, infusing new life and vigour into it, seeking out and creating fresh forms of Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras, and giving them their natural rights and functions, their Dharma in social economy, is the prime need for a vigorous social life. This Dharma also has to be freed from the bondages of fixed formulas, capable of changing to the needs of the time, giving new and more broadened expression to itself. Indian culture recognises the mutation of the social forms and rules according to the progress of time. As pointed out by Swami Vivekananda, "Social laws and usages based on Karma-Kanda have been changing and will always continue to change. But blind allegiance to social usages as are repugnant to the spirit of Shastras and the conduct of holy sages, has been one of the main causes of the downfall of the Aryan race."

If we can get away from the idea of political objectives which have obsessed the view of other societies, this structure of Indian society based on Dharma, seems

best calculated to promote the prosperity and happiness of human groups and the realisation of the highest destiny. Here, the Dharma of the king and the statesman was a subordinate one, one among many, not even primary at that. It never thought of being able to usurp the others, penetrating by its power and might into all the departments of life, usurping their place and imposing on them its sovereign rule. This becomes inevitable when people are organised primarily for political ends, for political conquest and defence, and, as a result, for economic efficiency and well-being. It entails a great concentration of power in a centralised authority necessitating the subservience and subordination of all other interests of society to it, which imposes its sovereign power over the collective life of the people. The rise and sovereignty of this dominant power which is represented by the State succeeds in organising society into a compact body, quick in executing orders, quick in organisation of the people for offence and defence, but the counteravailing defects are serious. It dwarfs and discourages the mass of other interests and pursuits of life, cultural, religious and humanitarian, by the engrossing interest of State-politics for which society is primarily organised, and also the dominant rule of one central body destroys the individuality and variety of all other healthy types of society which are harnessed to the service of the dominant type and its interests, producing a lifeless and uniform mechanic efficiency. So when the dominant type has spent itself, the social body decays after a short-lived vigorous life.

Indian society based on the harmony and unification, without destruction of the freedom and variety, of the diverse ele-

ments of ethnic and cultural types and on the maintenance of a rich, vigorous decentralised local life in free development and growth as represented in its village communities and Panchayats, has been able to secure a greater vitality and surviving power than societies organised on the basis of political states. The main bond of society is cultural, religious and social and not political. Kings and states were a subordinate element in social life, the sword always remained at the feet of Dharma. Therefore its growth and development has not been warped and obsessed by the dominant political motives. It has pursued and still pretends to pursue a religious, spiritual and social objective and has not surrendered the totality of its interests and collective existence to be captured by the State for political ends. It has escaped the aberration of a political state exploiting its labours for its ends of conquest, exploitation and economic prosperity. On the other hand, organised on the basis of Dharma, on the interests of social, cultural, ethical and religious needs of mankind, it aimed at guiding the destinies of man towards its goal and objective, spiritual knowledge and freedom. Society, based not on individual egoism seeking by unrestricted competition to coerce the social body and advance its material interests and efficiency for the satisfaction of natural desires and propensities *per se*, but on human groups determined by temperament, capacity and stage of ethical and spiritual development, aimed at avoiding the strife and warfare of classes and individuals rending the social body with constant unrest. And by each following its Swadharma, and serving the social body by the performance of it, and therein finding its own means of the satisfaction of lawful

desires, sounding life to its depths and ultimately by the informing sense of the religious significance of Swadharma regulating it,—to make life on earth a base for

mounting to the heights of spiritual knowledge, perfection and freedom, its supreme goal, is at bottom the high motive and ideal of Indian society.

EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(Translated from Bengali.)

CLXIII.

London,
13th Nov., '95.

My dear Akhandananda,

I am very glad to receive your letter. It is excellent work that you are doing. R— is very liberal and open-handed but there must be no advantage taken upon him for that reason. About the raising of funds by Sriman—, well, it is a fair enterprise, but my boy, this is a very queer world, where even the World-Gods Brahmā and Vishnu find it difficult to evade the clutches of lust and gold. Wherever there is any the least concern with money, there is the chance for misunderstanding. Let therefore nobody undertake such work as raising money on behalf of the Math. * * Whenever you hear of any householder collecting funds in my or our name on the plea of erecting a Math, or some such thing, the first thing you should do is to distrust him, and never set your hand to it. The more so, as householders of poor means take to various tricks to supply their wants. Therefore, if ever a trusty devotee or a householder with a heart, being of affluent circumstances undertakes such works as the founding of a Math, or if the funds raised be kept in the custody of a trusty householder of wealth,—well and good, otherwise never have a hand in it. On the contrary, you must dissuade others from such a thing. You are but a boy and are ignorant of the snare of gold. Opportunities will turn even a staunch moralist into a cheat. This

is the way of the world. * * It is not at all in our nature to do a work conjointly. It is to this that our miserable condition is due. He who knows how to obey, knows how to command. Learn obedience first. Among these Western nations, with such a high spirit of independence, the spirit of obedience is equally strong. We are all of us self-important—which never produces any work. Great enterprise, boundless courage, tremendous energy, and above all, perfect obedience—these are the only traits that lead to individual and national regeneration. These traits are altogether lacking in us.

Go on with the work as you are doing it, but then you must pay particular attention to study. J— Babu has sent a Hindi magazine, in which Pandit R— of Alwar has published a translation of my Chicago Addresses. Please convey my special indebtedness and thanks to both.

Let me now address myself to you—take particular care to start a centre in Rajputana. It must be in some central place, like Jaipur or Ajmere. Then branches must be established in towns like Alwar and Khetri. You must mix with all, we do not want to quarrel with any. Give my loving embrace to Pandit N—; the man is very energetic, and will be a very practical man of action in time. Tender my loving regards to Mr. M— and —ji too. A Religious Association or something of the kind has been afoot at Ajmere—what is it? Let me know all about it. M— Babu writes that he and others have written

me letters, but I have not received any up till now * * About Maths or centres, or things of the kind, it is no use starting them in Calcutta; Benares is the place for them. I have many plans like that, but all depends on funds. You will know of them by and by. You might have noticed from the papers that our movement is steadily gaining ground in England. Every enterprise in this country takes sometime to have a go. But once John Bull sets the hand to a thing, he will never let it go. The Americans are quick, but they are somewhat like straw on fire, ready to be extinguished. Do not preach to the public that Ramakrishna Paramahansa was an Incarnation, and things of that sort. I have some followers at —, look after them * * Infinite power will come unto you—never fear. Be pure, have faith, be obedient.

Teach against the marriage of boys. No scripture ever sanctions it. But for the present say nothing against little girls being married. Directly you stop the marriage of boys, that of girls will stop of itself. Girls are not surely going to marry among themselves! Write to the Secretary, Arya Samaj, Lahore, asking the whereabouts of a Sannyasin named A— who used to live with them. Make special inquiry of the man. * * Never fear.

Yours affectionately,
Vivekananda.

CLXIV.

Almora,
20th May, 1897.

Dear—,

* * I am glad to learn that the Association in Calcutta is going on nicely. It does not matter if one or two keep out. In time all will join. Have sympathy and good feelings for all. Sweet words carry far. The first thing is to see that new people come. We want ever new members.

J— is doing well. As Almora was very hot, I am living in a beautiful garden twenty

miles off. It is comparatively cool, but yet hot. I don't find much difference in the heat of this place from that of Calcutta.

* * To work! In full speed, and with undaunted zeal! Let us once throw the country into convulsions of energy.

Tender my love to all at the Math and give my greetings to the next meeting of the Association, and say that though I am not present in body, yet my soul is there where my Lord's name is sung. यावत्तव कया राम सञ्चरिष्यति मेदिनीम् &c.—"As far as talk of Thee, circulates in the world, O Rama! I am present there!" (Hanumân)—because, forsooth, the Atman is all-pervading.

Yours affectionately,
Vivekananda.

CLXV.

Almora,
15th June, 1897.

My dear—,

I am getting detailed reports of you and getting more and more delighted. It is that sort of work which can conquer the world. What do differences of sect and opinion matter? Bravo! Accept a hundred thousand embraces and blessings from me. Work, work, work,—I care for nothing else. Work, work, work, even unto death. Those that are weak must make themselves great workers, great heroes,—never mind for money, it will drop from the heavens. Let them whose gifts you will accept, give in their own name if they like, no harm. Whose name, and what is it worth? Who cares for name? Off with it! If in the attempt to carry morsels of food to starving mouths, name and possession and all be doomed even—अहो भाग्यमहो भाग्यम्—thrice blessed art thou! It is the heart the heart, that conquers, not the brain. Books and learning, Yoga and meditation and illumination—all are but dust compared with Love. It is love that gives you the supernatural powers, love that gives you Bhakti, love that gives illumination, and love, again,

that leads to emancipation. This indeed is worship, worship of the Lord in the human tabernacle. "नदे यदिदमुपासते"—"not this that people worship."* This is but the beginning, and unless we spread over the whole of India, nay, the whole earth, in that way, where lies the greatness of our Lord!

Let people see whether or not the touch of our Lord's feet confers divinity on man! It is this that is called liberation-in-life,—when the last trace of egoism and selfishness is gone. Well done! Glory to the Lord! Gradually try to spread. If you can, come to Calcutta, and raise a fund with the help of another band of boys; set one or two of them to work

* i. e. other than God.

at some place, and begin somewhere else. Spread in that way, and go on inspecting them. You will see that the work will gradually become permanent, and spread of religion and education will follow as a matter of course. I have given particular instructions to them in Calcutta. Do that kind of work and I shall carry you on my shoulders,—bravo! You will see that by degrees every district will become a centre—and that a permanent one. I am soon going down to the plains. I am a fighter and shall die in the battlefield. Does it behove me to sit up here like a zenana lady?

Yours with all love,

Vivekananda.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND SRI RAMAKRISHNA.*

[A page from his Life—His first meeting and acquaintance with Sri Ramakrishna.]

THE Hindu Scriptures follow the Vedas have indicated that the Brahmanjani Purusha (the knower of the Brahman) becomes omniscient—and that this scriptural statement is an infallible truth is verified if we study the actions of Sri Ramakrishna during the period of his ministry. For it is seen that it is not only that after realising the Nirguna and Saguna aspects of Brahman and being in direct communion with the Personal aspect of Brahmarshakti Maya, he had gone beyond all doubts and impurities of the mind and was staying in a condition of blissful freedom; but always dwelling on the divine plane of thought in the world of divine thinking, he could penetrate into whatever mysteries he desired to know of the

world of phenomenal Maya. Before his mind endowed with the keen penetrative vision of knowledge the world of Maya could not hide its real nature and inmost secrets. And that is to be. For, the Bhavamukha state (or the plane of the Divine consciousness) and the universal mind of Ishvara, the Lord of creation, in which the world-thought is sometimes taking manifested and sometimes unmanifested forms, are identical. Whoever is able to transcend the limits of the puny ego-consciousness and be identified with the Universal Mind, all the world-thoughts that arise in the Virat (universal) mind of God become also transparent to him. Because Sri Ramakrishna had reached that plane he was able to know about the devotees and the facts of their previous lives even before their arrival to him. He was able to know what special work and manifestation of the Lila of the Virat (universal) mind of God his present taking of human birth was meant to service and advance, and also that some high souls of spirituality had been born under the will of God as helpers of the said Lila. * * * Aware of this he was eagerly waiting, knowing their time of meeting and arrival at his presence.

* Translated from the Sri Sri Ramakrishna Lilaprasanga in Bengali by Srimat Swami Saradananda. The writer, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, being with him in company of Swami Vivekananda and other brother-disciples had thus great opportunity of observing the facts of the life of Swamiji described in the book and narrating them with great vividness and authenticity. We hope very often in the pages of P. B. as space permits to give translations from the book which we trust will prove interesting to our readers.

had come. * * * He who living within the phenomenal world of Maya was able to know all these hidden secrets of past and future, how can he be styled otherwise than as omniscient?

[The eagerness with which Sri Ramakrishna was awaiting their arrival, knowing from the high plane of Divine consciousness that the time of the meeting of the devotees who were destined as helpers of his life-mission was imminent, can be well appraised from the occasion of the first meeting of Sri Swami Vivekananda with him. Swami Brahmananda says, that contemporaneously with the time of his coming to Sri Ramakrishna, a gentleman of the Simla quarter of Calcutta named Sri Surendra Nath Mitra came to Dakshineswar and was blessed with the holy company and acquaintance of Sri Ramakrishna. From the first day Sri Surendra Nath was much attracted towards Sri Ramakrishna and, within a little while the acquaintance ripening into close relationship, invited him to his home and arranged for a day of religious festival and rejoicing. [In want of a good singer of religious songs, Sri Surendra cordially invited his neighbour, Sri Jut Viswanath Dutt's son, Sri Narendranath to sing religious songs of Bhajana on the occasion.] The meeting of Sri Ramakrishna and the chief helper in his life-mission, Swami Vivekananda, was thus brought about. It was then 1297, Bengali era, towards the end of the autumnal season—about November, 1881 of Christian era. Sri Narendranath was then of eighteen years of age and as a student was preparing for the F. A. examination of the Calcutta University.]

Swami Brahmananda says, it was evident that Sri Ramakrishna was much attracted to Narendranath seeing him that day. For calling first Surendranath and then Ramchandra to him he enquired and learned from them about this young man, a good singer, and requested them to take him to Dakshineswar one day to his presence. Moreover, when the Bhajana (religious songs) ended, coming to the young man and observing † the features and physiognomy of his face and body,

† It was one of Sri Ramakrishna's ways to observe the expression and the features of the face and the limbs of a new person coming to him for religious ministrations, as he could thereby divine the inner character and tendencies of the man.

in the course of a little conversation with him, he invited him to come to Dakshineswar one day.

A few weeks after the above event the F. A. Examination of the Calcutta University was over and Narendranath's father, requested by a respectable gentleman of the town, was negotiating for the marriage of his son with his daughter. Many relatives of Narendranath, like Ramchandra and others, urged by his father, were trying much to make Narendranath consent to the marriage. But the marriage did not come about on account of the strong objection of Narendranath. Ramchandra brought up in the family of Narendranath's father, in time became a doctor and was a distant relation of Narendranath. Understanding that Narendranath did not consent to marriage from the impulsion of a religious motive, he one day told him (Narendranath), [“If it is your real and earnest desire to be religious and acquire spirituality, then instead of wandering about in different societies in search of religion, come to Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar.”] His neighbour Surendranath also invited him one day about this time to go to Dakshineswar in his carriage. Agreeing to that, Narendranath in company of two or three friends arrived at Dakshineswar with Surendranath.

Seeing Narendranath that day the thoughts that arose in the mind of Sri Ramakrishna, he himself told us one day briefly in the course of conversation, thus:—

[“Narendra on that first day entered this room by the Western door (facing the Ganges). I saw in him no attention towards the body, no trimming and fashioning of hair of the head or finery of dress and clothing, no attachment towards external objects and interests, like other ordinary men of the world, as if everything about him was devoid of attachment for him. Looking at his eye I thought as if some power had drawn inwards by force a great part of his mind. Seeing him I thought, ‘In Calcutta, the abode of people engrossed with worldliness, is it possible for such an आधार of Sattvaguna, a person of such great Sattvaguna to live!’”]

[“There was a mat spread on the floor, I asked him to sit on it. Where the jar of Ganges water lies, he sat near it. That day three or four of his acquainted young men had come. I understood looking at them,

that their nature was quite contrary to Narendranath's—like ordinary men of the world with longing for worldly enjoyment.]

[“Enquiring about singing, I learnt that he knew only a few Bengali songs and on my asking him to sing them, he began with the song of Brahmasamaj, “मन चल निज निकेतने” etc. “O mind, come to your own home,” etc., and putting his whole mind and soul into it as if in meditation began to sing it. Hearing the song I could not control my religious emotions and fell into trance.”]

[“Afterwards when he went away, the whole time the mind was filled with such eager longing to see him as cannot be expressed in words. At times the pain was so intense that I felt like some one forcibly wringing a cloth within the heart. Then unable

to contain myself, running to an unfrequented part of the Dakshineswar garden near the pine trees, I used to weep aloud giving vent to pent-up feelings saying, [“O, you come, I cannot remain without you.”] Weeping for some time like this would relieve my feelings and I could control myself. For six months it was like this. For some among the other devotees who had come here the mind had felt attracted and distressed like that, but compared to what I felt for Narendranath, it was nothing.”]

Suppressing and hiding a good deal of the wonderful thoughts and feelings that arose in the mind of Sri Ramakrishna on seeing Narendranath for the first day at Dakshineswar he later on narrated them to us like the above, as we came to know afterwards.

VIVEKACHUDAMANI

(Continued from Vol. XXIV page 287.)

वाचं नियच्छात्मनि तं नियच्छ

बुद्धौ धियं यच्छ च बुद्धिसाक्षिणि ।

तं चापि पूर्णात्मनि निर्विकल्पे

विलाप्य शान्तिं परमां भजस्व ॥३६६॥

369. Restrain speech in the Manas, and restrain Manas in the Buddhi; this again restrain in the Witness of Buddhi, and merging that also in the Infinite Absolute Self, attain to supreme Peace.

[Speech—This includes all the sense-organs as well.

Witness—i. e. the Jivatman or individual aspect of the Self.

In this Sloka which reproduces in part Katha Upa. I. iii. 13, one is asked to ascend higher and higher, restraining successively the sense-activities, and mental activities, from the gross to the fine, till at last one is lost in Samadhi.]

देहप्राणोन्द्रियमनोबुद्ध्यादिभिरुपाधिभिः ।

यैर्वृत्तेः समायोगस्तत्तद्भावोऽस्य योगिनः ॥३७०॥

370. The body, Pranas, organs, Manas, Buddhi and the rest, with whichsoever of these Upadhis the mind is associated, the Yogin is transformed, as it were, into that.

तन्निवृत्त्या मुनेः सम्यक् सर्वोपरमणं सुखम् ।

संदृश्यते सदानन्दरसानुभवविप्लवः ॥३७१॥

371. When this is stopped, the man of reflection is found to be easily detached from everything and gets the experience of an abundance of everlasting Bliss.

अन्तस्त्वागो बहिस्त्वागो विरक्तस्यैव युज्यते ।

त्यजत्यन्तर्बहिःसङ्गं विरक्तस्तु मुमुक्षया ॥३७२॥

372. It is the man of dispassion (Vairagya) alone who is fit for this internal as well as external renunciation, for the dispassionate man, out of the desire to be free, relinquishes both internal and external attachment.

बहिस्तु विषयैः सङ्गं तथान्तरहमादिभिः ।

विरक्त एव शक्नोति त्यक्तुं ब्रह्मणि निष्ठितः ॥३७३॥

373. It is only the dispassionate man who, being thoroughly grounded in Brahman, can give up the external attachment for the sense-objects and the internal attachment for egoism etc.

[Egoism etc.—i. e. all modifications of the mind.]

वैराग्यबोधो पुण्यस्य पक्षिवत्
पक्षौ विजानीहि विचक्षण त्वम् ।

विमुक्तिसौभाग्यलताधिरोहणं
ताभ्यां विना नान्यतरेण सिद्ध्यति ॥३७४॥

374. Know, O wise one, dispassion and Realisation to be like the two wings of a bird in the case of a man. Unless both are there, none can, with the help of either one, reach the creeper of Liberation that grows on the top of an edifice, as it were.

Mukti has been compared to a creeper growing on the top of a lofty building, a temple for instance, as it is inaccessible to the ordinary man.]

अत्यन्तवैराग्यवतः समाधिः
समाहितस्यैव दृढप्रबोधः ।

प्रबुद्धतत्त्वस्य हि बन्धमुक्ति-
मुक्तात्मनो नित्यसुखानुभूतिः ॥३७५॥

375. For the extremely dispassionate man alone there is Samadhi, and the man of Samadhi alone gets steady Realisation; the man who has realised the Truth is alone free from bondage, and the free soul only experiences eternal Bliss.

वैराग्यान्न परं सुखस्य जनकं पश्यामि वश्यात्मन-
स्तच्चेच्छुद्धतरात्मबोधसहितं स्वाराज्यसाम्राज्यधुक्
एतद्द्वारमजलमुक्तियुवतेर्यस्मात्त्वमस्मात्परं
सर्वत्रास्पृहया सदात्मनि सदा प्रज्ञां कुरु श्रेयसे ॥

376. For the man of self-control I do not find any better instrument of happiness than dispassion, and if that is coupled with a highly pure realisation of the Self, it conduces to the suzerainty of absolute Independence; and since this is the gateway to the damsel of everlasting Liberation, therefore for thy welfare, be dispassionate both internally and externally, and always fix thy mind on the eternal Self.

[*Suzerainly etc.*—Because the Realisation of the Self, the One without a second, is the real inde-

pendence, for it is everlasting Bliss and there is nobody to dispute it.]

आशां छिन्धि विषोपमेषु विषयेष्वेव मृत्योः कृति-
स्त्यक्त्वा जातिकुलाश्रमेष्वभिमतिं

मुञ्चातिदूरान्क्रियाः ।

देहादावसति त्यजात्मधिपणां प्रज्ञां कुरुष्वान्मानि
त्वं द्रष्टव्यमनोऽसि निर्द्वयपरं ब्रह्मासि यद्वस्तुतः ॥

377. Sever thy craving for sense-objects which are like poison, for it is the very image of death, and giving up thy pride of caste, family and order of life, fling actions to a distance; give up thy identification with such unreal things as the body and the rest, and fix thy mind on the Atman. For thou art really the Witness, the Brahman, unshackled by mind, the One without a second, and Supreme.

लक्ष्ये ब्रह्मणि मानसं दृढतरं संस्थाप्य बाह्येन्द्रियं
स्वस्थानि विनिवेश्य निश्चलतनुश्चोपेक्ष्य देहस्थितिम् ।
ब्रह्मात्मैक्यमुपैल तन्मयतया चाखण्डवृत्त्याऽनिशं
ब्रह्मानन्दरसं पिवात्मनि मुदा शून्यैः किमन्यैर्भुशम् ॥

378. Fixing the mind firmly on the Ideal, Brahman, and restraining the external organs in their respective centres; with the body held steady, and taking no thought for its maintenance; attaining the identity with Brahman; and being one with It, always drink joyfully of the Bliss of Brahman in thy own Self, without a break. What is the use of other things which are entirely hollow ?

[*Restraining.....centres*—i. e. not allowing them to go outward.

Other things—pursued as means of happiness.]

अनात्मचिन्तनं त्यक्त्वा कश्मलं दुःखकारणम् ।
चिन्तयात्मानमानन्दरूपं यन्मुक्तिकारणम् ॥३७६॥

379. Giving up the thought of the not-Self which is evil and productive of misery, think of the Self, the Bliss Absolute, which conduces to Liberation.

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Vedanta Work in San Francisco.

To
The Editor, Prabuddha Bharata.
Sir,

It is very gratifying to us to be able to send to India such encouraging news of the work which is being done on behalf of the Vedanta cause through the able and untiring efforts of the Swami Prakashananda.

During these four years the Swami has had charge of the Society, its growth has been steady and progressive.

The public lectures delivered twice each Sunday (morning and evening) are well attended, and the membership is steadily increasing. At the present time the membership is the largest in many years.

In addition to the Sunday lectures, two class lectures are given weekly by the Swami. The lecture given on Tuesday evening is known as the "Gita Class" lecture, while that given on Thursday evening is known as the "Meditation Class" lecture.

On the first Thursday evening of each month a public question class is held, where many deep and interesting questions are put to Swami by earnest inquirers, and which are most ably answered by him.

During the Swami's association with us he has demonstrated a wonderful ability to harmonise and blend the characters of the many people who come to him. As has been aptly said by a fellow-student, "The Swami is like a great and loving mother in whom we find always a sympathetic listener to our many troubles and perplexities; his hand is ever extended to help and bless, no matter how rebellious we may be. So gentle in manner, so wonderfully tolerant, his pure and uplifting influence has been a great inspiration to us all, and the study of the man with such qualities a revelation in itself."

Once a year, during the month of June, the Swami holds the summer classes at the Shanti Ashrama which is located among the mountains of California, about fifty miles from any railroad. Its remoteness makes it an ideal spot for spiritual practices. Until late years the trip has been made

by mule team, but the last two years, the roads being in better condition, the trip has been in automobiles.

During the Swami's absence from the city, the Sunday morning lectures and the Tuesday evening Gita classes were discontinued; the Sunday evening lectures were given by President E. O. Brown, an ardent worker for the Vedanta cause. The Thursday evening class was conducted by one of the students.

Our library, of which we are duly proud, contains a variety of Vedanta literature which excels any other on this coast. That it is a success and highly appreciated by the public and members is attested by the fact of substantially increasing sales each month.

Our reading room, which is open to all, has proved to be the source of great usefulness by giving the general public an opportunity to come in closer touch with the Vedanta thought.

Realising what it means to be privileged to come in contact with the Swami, and being fully aware of the great and lasting good which is being done through his untiring efforts and uplifting influence, we are indeed grateful to India for her kindness in sending such great souls to enlighten us—to lead us in the path of Truth, Light and Wisdom. In this Western country, where every effort is put forth to acquire wealth and power, man has little inclination to search for the "Heaven within." The spirit of the teachings of Christ has been lost, for "The letter killeth; the Spirit alone is life and light."

(Sd.) Lucille Burnham,
(Virati)

Secy., Vedanta Society of S. Francisco.

Work at the Shanti Ashrama.

On June 30th ended our yearly visit to the Shanti Ashrama, in the mountains where seventeen students had gone to attend summer classes, and to practise meditation and Yoga under Swami's guidance.

Under a large oak tree the meditation platforms have been built where the students repair three times a day (sunrise, noon, and sunset) to listen to Swami explain from the great books of wis-

dom such as Crest-Jewel of Discrimination, Upanishad, Sayings and Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, etc. Before reading, we meditate for half an hour, and terminate the service by singing hymns to the Lord.

At the time of the full moon we had the Dhuni Night (all night service). It was held on a high hill on which a large triangle was built and in that triangle a huge fire. The Swami sat facing the fire. The men sat on his right and women on his left and we commenced the service by marching around the fire and chanting Hariboll. The night was clear; the stars, large and brilliant, seemed so near that one felt them to be friends coming to join in chanting the glories of the Lord; all was so still and peaceful, the air was vibrant with spirituality;—one became aware of an expansion of consciousness that the sense-life, the worldly knowledge, but hides the higher and subtler truths as yet not realised; but which at that moment seemed possible of attainment;—a dream seen through a mist.

It was easy to discard all our sins in the purifying fires that night, and to consecrate our lives for the search of the Lord. Many students asked for, and received Sanskrit names, and expressed their heartfelt thanks to the Swami for the privilege of being there. The earnestness and devotion displayed by the several young men present, was a sight unheard of in this materialistic country. All seemed for the moment transformed into other beings in higher spheres. It was a night that will long be remembered by all and will be to some as a landmark in their spiritual progress.

At last came the sad day of return to the city, there to pick up our burdens and problems of life again;—but with renewed strength and clearer vision, and the feeling that the Divine Mother is ever within call of our earnest prayer and surrender to Her.

Our salutation to Sri Ramakrishna who found truth in all religions, and who gave freely of His great realisation to all. He is indeed the great brilliant torch that will light the world, and though many thousand miles away and of another caste, we all dare to claim Him as our Avatar.

(Sd.) Durga Devi.

(Clara M. Pettee)

San Francisco, Cal.

REVIEWS.

To the Nations.—From the French of M. Paul Richard. With an Introduction by Srijut Rabindranath Tagore. Pp. ix+76. Cloth-bound. Price Re. 1-8-0. Published by Messrs. Ganesh & Co., Madras.

We welcome this little volume from the pen of Mr. Richard who is a known figure in the journalistic world of India. The book was first published in French in America, in 1917, and now Messrs. Ganesh & Co. presents us with this admirable English translation. The great European War was still raging when the thoughts embodied in the book first saw the light of day, and now that the War has terminated, we are in a position to verify to a certain extent the correctness of the position taken up by the learned author. It is gratifying to note that all sound and impartial thinkers, men who have the brains to conceive great thoughts and the heart to make them inclusive enough to meet the requirements of all nations on earth, will give their support to the principles which the author has sought to enunciate in the book. For man is not a depraved and self-seeking being by nature, on the contrary he is full of nobility and disinterestedness; they may be latent in the case of most, owing to circumstances which retard their manifestation, but given favourable opportunities, they are sure to come out and make for the regeneration of the world. It is therefore that whenever a noble and universal idea is preached, the hearts of thoughtful and philanthropic people all over the world leap up with joy; distance and racial differences cannot stand in the way of their appreciating it.

In the twelve chapters into which the book is divided the author tries to probe the real motives of human actions, and does not hesitate to point out that behind our professions of catholicity and disinterestedness there often lurk egoism and selfishness, and States also are not an exception to this. In their case the horizon is a little widened, but it is selfishness all the same. So long as nations consider themselves as separate entities, and claim special privileges for themselves to the exclusion of the rest of Humanity, the motive behind their activities is bound to be egoistic

and prejudicial to the well-being of the world as a whole. According to Monsieur Richard, Humanity ought to be the goal to which all nations on earth should aspire, and considering themselves as children of one common Mother, they should treat one another exactly as sisters. This War, he opines, is a great eye-opener owing to its very violence, and will ultimately create in men's minds a total repugnance to war. The following words are worth quoting: "No nation lives for itself. No nation lives but through the services it renders to Humanity. As long as it remains of service to Humanity it remains alive. Even if it thinks only of itself, even if it seeks but its own ends, yet as far as these ends involuntarily serve the general interest, it is tolerated. But when it ceases to be of any service at all, the force which sustained it withers: it withers and disappears; for Humanity rejects it." Liberty, Equality and Fraternity—these the author holds up as watchwords for progress and true civilisation, and insists on strict justice being meted out to *all*. For "the awakening in man of a consciousness of Humanity," which alone, he thinks, will cure the present ills of social and political life, "must be assembled from all the nations of the earth the men who think the thought of Humanity. It is they who will one day lead the nations."

In exposing the false pretences of material civilisation the author is justly severe, and very reasonably draws our attention to the purification and broadening out of hearts which, he says, will pave the way to a World-Federation. Nobody would question the soundness of the ideals set forth in the book, but many will doubt if the wished for millennium would ever come to pass. For the world is vast, and selfishness is deep-rooted in man, through the *Samskaras* of ages, of birth after birth. Still, everyone should do his part in this struggle for banishing unrighteousness from the world, and remain content to die in the attempt too. Thus alone can real work be done, and we thank the author for his taking up the gauntlet and boldly throwing out the challenge in favour of the spiritual solidarity of man as man. The Introduction from the able pen of Sri Jut Rabindranath is a worthy companion to the book which, we make bold to say, should be read and re-read by men of light and leading in all nations.

The Seed of Race. An Essay on Indian Education by Sir John Woodroffe. Messrs Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp. 65. Price Re. 1.

We find ourselves in agreement with the thoughts, ideas and conclusions of the book. It is a timely production, when ideals of national education in India are being discussed, and the author emphasises one aspect of it which is very often ignored. National education does not mean simply education imparted by Indians who secure the emoluments of the teacher, but by Indians who are steeped in the culture of Indian thought and life, its distinctive outlook and characteristics. The author explains with great luminousness what a racial self means from the Vedantic standpoint. "It is the collective (Samasthi) causal body (Karanadeha) of the totality of the minds and bodies of a Race" in which are imbedded the collective Sangskara, or "the impression upon and tendency of the mind produced by previous Karma." This Sangskara realises itself as the mind and body of a Race and of the individuals composing it. In the cosmic causal body the Sangskara of the whole human race is contained, and at creation, "there is a going forth or realising of it as Mind and Matter. Different races represent different currents in the outward flow," and "a particular racial consciousness is thus a particular defined stream in the whole cosmic flow," "which realises itself as a Race with its beliefs, practices and social institutions." Therefore by the Racial Spirit is meant "the fundamental characteristic and outlook on life which distinguishes one race from another," which is the Seed or Type of Race. "Some individuals of a race by reason of purity of stock or intensity of soul represent typically the Spirit of Race, hence is called by such terms as a typical Englishman." "Again, the social customs, beliefs, institutions of a Race vary in course of its history, but an element, the spirit of Race, persists throughout all the varying forms in which it clothes itself." "This spirit latent as collective Sangskara becomes patent in a general national character and the particular cultural forms it produces." "The forms change under the influence of time and other conditions affecting a race," but if the race is vital it cleaves to its Racial Spirit and creates fresh cultural forms and contributes its quota to the thought of the world and solution

to the problem of life, thus advancing the progress and well-being of humanity.

This idea of the Racial Self and the need of its free development based on the Vedanta will change the whole attitude and relation of cultures and racial units to one another; conflict, strife and intolerance will give place to mutual esteem, friendly coexistence, and even positive helpfulness. If each Racial unit represents one great idea of the Divine Mind seeking to project and realise itself in human life, then human culture and civilisation will be the richer by the inclusion of that idea, which is essential to the sum of human progress; and that race by the services it has rendered to that idea in course of historical evolution is eminently fitted to conserve and preserve it for contribution to the future universal culture of humanity. Therefore the imperative need of fostering it, helping it to self-fulfilment is what appears necessary for the general good of humanity. The irony is that this view of Racial Spirit and its distinctive development is regarded by some as leading to separatism and antagonism. We know what their idea of unity and amity means. It means the forcible imposition of one over another by conflict, suppressing its essential cultural spirit and forms, leading to its extinction. The modern mind is much overridden by an intolerant and exclusive view in all matters of culture, thinking that one and only one view must be right and have the whole possession of truth, nobility, capacity of human progress and well-being and the others are utterly false and antagonistic to it and may therefore be rightly suppressed and extinguished for the advancement of human civilisation and culture. A more generous, enlightened and embracing view of human life and achievements reveals that there is no race which has not some *raison d'être*, some great and uplifting idea, some contribution to the sum of human progress. Until this generous and embracing interpretation of cultures possesses the mind of man it is difficult to see how the prospect of unity, amity and solidarity of human life will be realised. A correct appreciation of the Racial Self, what it means, how its growth and self-fulfilment is necessary for the completion of the full orb of human destiny will assuredly help peacefully towards this increasing friendliness of races and ultimate solidarity of mankind.

Education is the chief factor in fostering and strengthening this vital centre, the life-theme of the race; therefore the right type of Education is essential to regeneration, racial vitality and creation. Sir John justly says that Western education in India has tended to smother this Racial Spirit. This is due both to the predominance of Western literature, philosophy, art, without a counter-balance of Indian studies and also because it found the people in a low state of vitality. But that it did depress it and led to intense unthinking depreciation of Indian culture by Indians educated in the schools and mere imitativeness of Western ways of life and thinking, there is no doubt.

But the author's insisting with such emphasis on this prime need of strengthening the Racial Soul and the recovery of it by the Indians as the condition of vitality and healthy activity, does not mean his minimising the importance of Western education, the knowledge of Western literature, philosophy and science. He is right in insisting, "that education should be continued to be given as regards English and other Western languages, modern science and so forth, but that it should be accompanied by an Indian culture which should be regarded as primary and as designed to foster the racial spirit," and that "the knowledge of the English language and of Western science is essential to the progress of this country," thus belying the misrepresentation of his critics that his insistence on the Racial Spirit is a reactionary counsel meant to exclude the light, influence and wisdom of other cultures. He justly says that this is so obvious that one cannot hold otherwise. What he labours to establish is that by the strengthening and recovery of Racial Self, "an autonomous centre of receptivity is established capable of receiving every form of culture, because there is then a healthy organism capable of assimilating every form of food presented to it. A knowledge of foreign life and thought is as necessary to India as a knowledge of what is its own. It is this last which has been neglected." For this counsel of staunchness and loyalty to Racial Self is not for pandering to a false pride or vanity, to keep each racial unit an air-tight cultural apartment, but is the very first condition by which genuine interchange, and assimilation of ideals becomes possible, to build a richer unity in place of

a loose accretion and meaningless juxtaposition.

The author justly contends for the right type of Indians for that part of teaching which consists of characteristically Indian studies. "The fact of science may be taught by any. But racial qualifications do very largely enter into the question of the competency to teach Indian religion, philosophy, literature and art. It is natural that an Indian should best appreciate what his race has produced. It is this side of culture which has been neglected in the education hitherto given to Indian youths." "This portion of education can be best given by Indian teachers, but they must be truly Indian themselves and not 'sedulous apes' of a foreign civilisation." By true Indian, he means "one who has knowledge of, and reverence for his civilisation and will carry it forward with devotion to truth and the needs of living men and women."

The view of education enunciated in this book is very sane and truthful and in the saying expresses itself with such clearness and in such harmony with the Vedantic thought that it ought easily to commend itself to the Hindu mind. The practical conclusions drawn from it are so well-advised, and conducive to national well-being, nobility and independence of spirit, that we cannot too well lay the counsel to our heart. The main argument of the book, the maintenance of the Seed of Race, its cultural spirit, and its means of realisation, the first place and importance of Indian studies which have been hitherto neglected, is one which is very often ignored by educationists in India, at any rate not sufficiently estimated. On the contrary, a healthy, vigorous, man-making education lies only in this line, and we must at once lay hold of it and press for its realisation in the educational schemes of the country. Before its realisation the great future of India will not be ushered in; as it is vital to its future destiny. We are glad to note that Sir John Woodroffe's views expressed in the book are very much in harmony with the views on education held by the Swami Vivekananda; and both on this ground and on its intrinsic merits we commend the book to the attention of our countrymen for early fulfilment in Indian Education.

NEWS AND NOTES.

THE birthday anniversary celebration of Swami Vivekananda falls on the 18th January 1920. All Centres, Societies and Associations celebrating the anniversary are requested to kindly send us reports of the celebrations for insertion in the February issue of Prabuddha Bharata.

We have received a report of the Vedanta work in Bombay from which we cull the following:

During the month of November 1919, Swami Govindananda invited by the Students' Brotherhood of Thana delivered a lecture on "The Message of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda," and by Sri Ramakrishna Lodge, Dadar, delivered a lecture at Dadar on "Religion, the crying need of India." Under the auspices of the Vedanta Ashrama itself a public lecture was delivered by him on "The Call of Your Country," in the Vanita Vishram Hall.

Under the auspices of the Young Men's Hindu Association weekly Vedanta classes are held in the premises of the Association. The attendance at these classes is steadily rising. The class commenced with an attendance of fifteen only and the attendance on the last Saturday was about two hundred.

Daily morning classes on the Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita are conducted by the Swami in the Vedanta Ashrama Room (Top-floor, Rawal Buildings, Lamington Road, Bombay).

The Canara Saraswat Association has approached the Swami to conduct daily night classes on the Kathamrita and weekly public lectures in their Hall on Vedanta. From this month (December), this work also will be taken up.

THE Sunday Services and Tuesday Classes in the Vedanta Centre, Boston, continued without interruption throughout the summer, and the attendance was unusually good. The Swami conducted all meetings from May until after the first Sunday of August, when he placed them in charge of Sister Devamata and withdrew for a period of rest before setting out on a lecture tour through the Northwest. He spent one week with friends at Garrison-on-the-Hudson and also paid several visits to New Hampshire. During one of these, he delivered a lecture at East Jaffrey on "The Literary and Spiritual Value of the Upanishads," to which people came from Dublin, Hancock, Peterborough and other nearby places, manifesting sincere interest in the message given.

The Thursday class was resumed on the 2nd of October and all other meetings remained the same.

THE Swami Paramananda's season in Los Angeles last spring infused new life into the Centre founded by him there several years ago. Since his departure in May, the members have continued their bi-weekly meetings with warm enthusiasm and have worked with zeal to enlarge the field of the Centre's activities. Various of the members have visited the Boston Centre, thus creating a new link between the Eastern and Western branches of the Swami's work. They are now eagerly preparing for the Swami's return.—Message of the East.

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